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The introduction of European Studies in the Universities from Romania

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Abstract

In Romania, European Studies have been introduced relatively late compared with other European countries. Immediately after the fall of the Communism, Romanian Universities made efforts to introduce the European dimension in their curricula. The first specializations of European Studies date from the middle of the 90th. Today, the Romanian Higher Education in the field of European Studies respects the European standard and provides courses at European level.

Key words: European Studies, Romania, Higher Education, beginnings of specialization

European Studies, taught today in most European universities at bachelor, master or doctorate, became a natural component of the curricula of higher education study. They introduce the European dimension in higher education and over time, contributed to the ongoing process of European integration of countries from the European space to the great family of European Community and later the European Union.

Currently, there are differences or different ways of approaching the teaching - learning for European Studies in various countries of the European Union, according to the time of accession to it (J. González, R. Wagenaar, 2005:19). Founding countries of the European Union or those that joined the European Union many years ago see differently the European integration process and the European issues. We believe that this diversity is beneficial and it would be a mistake to impose uniformity in this field of study. However one can see many similarities in the objectives of European research programs and competencies that graduates need to acquire to complete their studies.

In Romania, European studies have been introduced relatively late compared with other European countries, where they existed since the creation of the European Union, according to International Report¹ published in 1989 which include the place and role of European Studies in European Union countries to date. Andrei Marga, former education minister in Romania between December 1997 - December 2000, specifies in the volume *Years of Reform and what followed* that “In 2000 was covered the introduction of European studies in the curricula of schools, colleges and universities in the Romanian accession process to the European Union” (A. Marga, C. Baba, 2005:61).

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¹ In 1989, the Association of the European Community Studies (ECSA) has conducted an extensive report titled „Place de l'intégration européenne dans les programmes universitaires. Rapports nationaux” presented in Brussels on June 29 to 30, 1989 in ECSA-Europe Conference on the status of subjects with a European orientation, which includes state of European studies at each of the member countries of the European Community until 1990, or as its name says, place of European integration in the university curricula.

In this study we wanted to verify from where European studies have emerged in Romania, as they were born and how they present themselves in Romania until 2000, when this phenomenon started to grow in our country by creating new disciplines in the spirit of the European Union and by creating new specializations in higher education.

This work does not pretend to be exhaustive. It would, however, reflect a state of affairs and an existing reality, an inventory of existing resources and it's a tool able to reflect a new approach and dynamic needs in the higher education.

Aspects of Romanian university education in the 90s

After 1989, education reform was one of the stated priorities of all governments that have succeeded. The years that followed were years of transition from all points of view, and in education it was felt quite strongly. The first three years of transition were characterized by the lack of a coherent policy on education. Immediate corrective measures have predominated, taken under the influence of various pressure groups, or the desire to eliminate as quickly as possible the most visible aspects of communist education. In government programs, the objectives regarding the education were irrelevant or were absent altogether (D.C. Radulescu, 2006:108).

Romanian school in the early 90s was in a unique situation: it was forced to produce changes that the government was unable to challenge or even to manage. Until then the Ministry controlled administratively almost all aspects of university life. But in 1968 Education Act (amended in 1977) had become largely ineffective. Phenomena as: curriculum development, international openness, emergence of new institutional structures (universities, colleges, private universities), pressure for university autonomy escaped from the ministry's capacity to contain them. Universities were moving faster than the ministry was reacting. And therefore his work was soon to meet the challenges coming to him, not to produce him a change. The reagent character was associated with the selective: although in that period appeared tens, even hundreds of private higher education institutions, the ministry didn't want to stick them into account, they do not exist. As a result, to the university life has been added the chaos, the legislative and institutional confusion (A. Miroiu *et al*, 1998:117).

Romanian higher education in 1993 showed in many ways unrecognizable. Only then the ministry has managed to initiate a difficult process of relocation into new frameworks of the already established. Has been developed a White Paper reform, has enacted Law no. 88/1993 on accreditation of higher education diplomas and has elaborated the draft of the education law (A. Miroiu *et al*, 1998:117).

However, at national level they have made the following improvements: improve curriculum by refreshing the list of disciplines, enhancing international conference sessions organized in faculties, revival of the academic scientific production, progress equipping with modern equipment of faculties and departments, expanding group of specialists who participated in the meetings and international scientific activities. It also states that have strengthened the

university faculties and departments and points out the universities do not yet have a 100% autonomous, leading them in part by laws developed long time ago. One aspect that seems important to note is that since 1993, Andrei Marga, Rector of Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, expressing his intention of setting European Studies Faculty in the very near future at the University of Babes-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca (A. Marga, 2009:18), this being the second of its kind in Eastern Europe. This statement confirms the extraordinary opening of the University desires, but also the need to rally to a European system, free, democratic and a trend that existed at that time in Europe for a few years.

It is interesting to note that this trend towards Europeanization is found only in Transylvania at the time, space always characterized by multiculturalism and multiethnic.

Romanian education alignment to European standards

In this context of change in the academic year 1994-1995 is established at the University of Babes-Bolyai in Cluj, in addition to other specialties or independent colleges, the *School of Comparative European Studies*, as a school with rank of faculty (A. Marga, 2009:30), thus promoting European Studies at undergraduate level. Just four years after the fall of communism in Romania is set the first School that speaks about the opening to Europe and to the values promoted by it. In addition, starting this academic year, many functional Cultural Centers are established besides the University, of which the most important for our research are the *European Center*, *Library of European Studies* and *International Mobility of Students Office* (A. Marga, 2009:31), mentioning the importance of mobility in Europe and beyond, both as students and teachers. This year marks the choice of University of Cluj as a permanent member of the *Higher Committee of the Council of Europe* and its integration into the *European University Association* (A. Marga, 2009:31).

In the academic year 1994-1995, at the initiative of the Academy of Economic Studies (ASE) in Bucharest, the Faculty of International Business and Economics (REI), a consortium of 13 partners and five Romanian EU partners is designed to elaborate and develop a TEMPUS project for teaching economics. The project was approved by the European Training Foundation and was applied in the 1995-1996 academic year (I. Popa, 1998:122-123). It is, therefore, the beginning of European Studies in Bucharest, where they are taught at Master level.

1995-1996 academic year brings many changes in the lives of other universities: Pro Europe journals and several volumes of European Studies appear, at Babes-Bolyai University, the *School of Comparative European Studies* became the *Faculty of European Studies*, graduates obtaining license, this being “the most comprehensive international studies program in the country” (A. Marga, 2009:65).

At the University of Timisoara are the foundations of a Comparative European Studies School, designed as a postgraduate program for three years. It aims is to achieve the purpose for which it was created, that is to form specialists who have skills in complex issues of building a united Europe. The studies curriculum is centered on several essential subjects related

to politic, economic and legal components of European construction, but also with complementary disciplines including social sciences or modern languages. The author also mentions that the Schools is in the third year of existence, and already enjoys a reputation (C. Popeti, 1998:132). We can, therefore appreciate that this school has started its activity in the academic year 1994-1995, providing Master courses in European Studies.

At the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University from Iași, starting with the academic year 1997-1998, was created a postgraduate program, with an interdisciplinary character, completed with a Master's degree in European Studies (L. Vrănescu, 1998:248).

A few years later, under the guidance of Adrian Miroiu², in spring 1998 is published in volume titled *The Romanian education today- Study of diagnostics* at Publishing Polirom in Iasi. Here it is mentioned that "education modernization programs launched since 1990 have produced superficial effects curriculum" (A. Miroiu *et al*, 1998:77), and to align with European standards, the Romanian education must still make progress. The progress that Romania should take into account to have a competitive education, but also the sense that is going this modernization, were linked to European demands that our country had to meet.

The legal basis of relations between Romania and the European Union is the European Association Agreement³. This document has been signed with Romania on 1 February 1993, was promulgated by the President of Romania on 5 April 1993 and published in the "Official Gazette" of 12 April 1993. Europe Agreement came into force on 1 February 1995. European Agreement establishing Romania association with the European Union to establish permanent political dialogue forms. On 22 June 1995, Romania has made, together with the formal application for EU membership, and the National Strategy for Romania's accession to the EU, which aims to provide some solutions on how to lift the European standards of various sectors. On 25 July 1996, was submitted to Brussels Romania's answer to the European Commission questionnaire on preparation of opinion on the application for EU membership.

On 16 July 1997, the European Commission released the package of documents known as Agenda 2000 and opinions on all the 10 associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Agenda 2000 provides a clear vision of the European Union means at entry into the twenty-first century. Based on this Agenda Romania has the duty to obtain an education guide to European standards, performance and competitive. Given the multitude of changes, but also establishing the first private universities in Romania, as well as increasing the number of public universities, of new faculties or study programs and specializations, was adopted the Law no. 88/1993, concerning accreditation of higher education diplomas, republished. Under this Act, was established the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (CNEAA), who carried out the activities supported by evaluation, institutional and program accreditation (ARACIS, 2006:3).

² It is currently professor of political science at the Faculty of Political Sciences, National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest.

³ It is a treaty between the EU and non-EU country that creates the legal framework for cooperation between them.

Later, in 1998 it founded at the University of Bucharest, the Department of International Relations and European Studies, which operates as an autonomous department of the Faculty of Letters, from the academic year 1998-1999. This structure was designed from the perspective of higher education reform as an effort to modernize in line with developments in contemporary Romania, oriented towards European integration. In such a context and in the academic environment, European Cultural Studies department proposes this specialization, with duration of four years, held the day classes ended with a graduation exam and a paper.

Also during this period is created the university autonomy as a tool to optimize performance, by eliminating stagnation and irrelevance (A. Marga, 2009:54). Arise also the university senates, composed of faculty members. Throughout this period of transition for the Romanian education and European level produced many changes occur. One of the most important changes in the level of education in Europe proposed is the Bologna Declaration in 1999. It was signed by the ministers responsible for higher education in 29 states, including Romania. The main objective of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area, based on international cooperation and academic exchanges, a European space so attractive to students and European teachers and for students and teachers worldwide. By creating the European Higher Education Area is intended to facilitate mobility of students, graduates and staff in higher education, preparing students for their future careers and for life as active citizens of democratic societies, and providing support for their personal development and providing wide access to quality higher education. The three priorities of the Bologna Process are: introduction of a higher education system with three cycles (bachelor, master and doctorate), quality assurance and recognition of education qualifications and study periods (L. Pislaru, 2009).

In 2000, it established at the University Alexandru Ioan Cuza in Iasi the Center for European Studies. The mission of the Center for European Studies (CES) is to help to the cultural, economic and social development in North-East of Romania, as support for EU integration. The Center was established through the Phare program and operates since 2000 as an inter-departmental faculty of the University, providing academic programs for education, research and consulting designed to promote European values, to encourage dialogue on issues concerning European integration and contribute to Romania's EU accession preparation.

After the year 2000 is established at several universities in Romania Centers, Departments or Chairs of European Studies and International Relations which begin to implement their projects in the framework of Jean Monnet Action.

European Studies in Romania

In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the reflections on European Studies begin to be visible since 1997, even if the area is still very new. In 1997, at Cluj-Napoca is organized the conference *European Studies Today*, which reiterated the multidisciplinary nature of the domain, thus allowing the description, conceptualization, explanation and understanding of

European realities, which is impossible under a single discipline (A. Marga, 1998:13). The volume of this conference summarizes very well the concerns at that time for opening to European education, but also the state of the European studies in Romania in 1997.

In the opening volume, Andrei Marga, provides some clarification of the concept of European Studies. He says that the European studies are multidisciplinary studies, since their goal is to describe, to conceptualize, to explain and understand a reality that cannot be understood and synthesized by a single discipline. Moreover, the increasing complexity of life in recent years does not allow traditional mono-disciplinary approaches (A. Marga, 1998:13). In addition, he points out that all Europeans must share the same values, to defend and implement them through participation at their multiplication.

Dan Grigorescu shows the development of European studies through the European program TEMPUS for Romania. He says that TEMPUS program has had a big impact on institutions and its effects have resulted in new management practices at the departmental and faculty level, creating new departments and developing and introducing new activities in accordance with the new values (D. Grigorescu, 1998:23).

Also in this context it is presented the challenge of Agenda 2000 and Romania's integration into European Union structures, article that highlights the importance of a faculty of European Studies in Romania (A. Boca, 1998:50), but also their status as a specialist degree in European Studies at European level⁴. The author emphasizes the importance of European studies for the preparation of specialists for Romania at the European institutions but also to offer a multidisciplinary opening to graduates of this specialization (G. Sabău, 1998:73).

Ioan Popa, in his study *Developing curricula for European Studies: a TEMPUS Experience*, proposes to analyze two important issues, from his point of view regarding the development of European Studies curriculum. First, to what point the European studies may be considered as an area of special research and learning. In other words, on strictly economic field, the question arises whether there is any reason to talk about the European economy in particular, instead of economics or about international economic Euromarketing? Secondly, the question is whether indeed the introduction of European Studies curricula meet the requirements of system updates and upgrades to higher education, i.e the new disciplines "Euro" are indeed an improvement that touches the essence or are only some new books covering subjects hiding already outdated (I. Popa, 1998:123). Thus, in the academic year 1994-1995 represents the beginning of European Studies in Bucharest, at Master level.

At the same conference, Cornelius Popeți proposes an interesting vision on European studies in his study entitled *The Institutionalization of European Studies - Achievements, Difficulties, and Perspectives*. From the outset stated that he believes that the promotion of European studies, i.e. placing them in institutions, must be addressed both from the perspective of Romania's integration in Europe, but also in terms of educational reform in our country. Thus, he proposes the following three main directions: first to be seen whether Romania has a strategy of integration into European structures. Then, he suggests checking the stage in which the

educational reform in our country is, and the third, the author asks what the European studies are (C. Popeti, 1998:131). His study responds, in turn, at all these issues raised. Moreover, he presents the moment of introduction of European studies in Timisoara. Thus at Timisoara University are the foundations of Comparative European Studies. This school has started its activity in the academic year 1994-1995, providing Master courses in European Studies.

An interesting perspective on European studies also offers Victor Neumann in his study entitled *Perspectives on European Studies in Romania: the training of trainers*. He said that the questions concerning the purpose of European studies is well justified since the theoretical debates fail to show their point of interest. It is difficult to determine the status of European Studies as a discipline, Victor Neumann said, as long as international institutions that promote such studies cannot be converged in having a common point of view on European studies (V. Neumann, 1998:243). The author also mentions that it is an illusion to believe that the study of inter-governmental relations in their various variations, or that learning to solve certain problems related to political and social ways of organization, are sufficient to contemporary European studies. His skepticism, like other researchers, it is clear from the fact that the European studies cannot evolve without sufficient philosophical references and without a solid theoretical basis (V. Neumann, 1998:243).

Livia Vrănescu in his article *Tempus Project Support for European Integration Studies*, explains the introduction of European-oriented studies at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University from Iași⁵. The author mentions that the University Senate decided in 1995 to create the Department of European Studies, this having an interdisciplinary character. The purpose of this department has been coordinating training programs for future teachers, but also developing a new curriculum. Finally, starting with the academic year 1997-1998, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University from Iași offers a postgraduate program in European Studies (L. Vrănescu, 1998:248).

The articles published in this volume, in the international conference *European Studies today* offers a clear vision of European studies at that time in Romania. We can conclude that between 1994-1997 were founded first programs of study in Romania in the European studies, most at Master's level. The fact that in 1997 in Romania was held such an event is a concrete proof of their existence and reveals a concern in this respect. Meetings with specialists in the European studies, from other countries, as evidenced by the volume, are an important experience that can share the results and needs, but also may create new directions and developments.

Another important fact in the marking and delivery of European studies as a specialization in Romania is the publication in 2003 by Claudiu Crăciun of his study *Nesting Europe. The State of European Studies and Research in Romania*. The aim of this paper is to initiate the formation of a true picture of European Studies and to provide information and insights that can help both the Romanian institutions in question and that school communities, to focus efforts and policies to a more rapid institutionalization of the discipline and research areas (C. Crăciun, 2003:30).

Claudiu Crăciun says that the first departments that were founded in Romania were those of Political Science, which included various courses of International Relations and European Studies. He says the number is difficult to determine because many of them are in the permitting process or other in temporary operation. According to data presented, however, at that time, there were 10 departments of Political Science in Romania, of which only two independent. Another area that has tried to include European studies under their tutelage was Public Administration (C. Crăciun, 2003:30).

In terms of competition and cooperation, the author asserts that one of the most striking features of European Studies departmental dynamics of European Studies is the competition for obtaining academic respect. The problem is that even this competition has its landmarks outside the country. The status of a department or program of study is given in principle by the existence of various funds, contacts with foreign organizations and institutions being very important, as the presence of renowned scientists. This is the trend that is observed in all the universities from Romania, since they are clearly oriented towards the outside and less inside. For this reason, many disciplines are lacking in content of the evidence of a national research agenda and an appropriate organizational support.

To understand how the European Studies are taught in Romania, Claudiu Crăciun proposes to take into account the following relevant issues. First, in the social sciences in Romania, students and faculty had to go through a period of transition from an ideological approach, dark and very authoritarian, to one more modern and oriented communication. For example, in Romania, before 1989, there are few traces of a rudimentary teaching of political science and international relations in the Academy „Ștefan Gheorghiu” from Bucharest, where Communist Party officials were trained. This institution would be a great base for teaching about Europe today. Second, the reform process can take a long time. However, this was somewhat amortized by the infusion of young professionals trained abroad. On the other hand, leaving aside ideological handicap, there were groups of specialists in different disciplinary areas (eg economics, law, history and even philosophy) who had to catch up, recover, to be able to contribute to the agenda of European Studies. The first department to cover aspects of European integration was the Law, which is easily explained. Scholars in Law had a previous experience, well prepared and of course access to information about Europe, namely the legal documents of 50 years of European construction. Other disciplines have necessarily followed, mainly by shifting some researchers to a new terrain rather than through the conscious reform of the old curriculum (C. Crăciun, 2003:30). The evolution of European Studies in Romania is confirmed by the European Commission through the Directorate General for Education and Culture, Jean Monnet Project, which between 1990 and 2002 financed various academic initiatives: five modules Jean Monnet, nine permanent courses and four Jean Monnet Chairs in 9 Romanian universities. Taken together, they comprise 18 successful initiatives within existing disciplines: four in History, four in EU law, 6 in the European Economy, two in Political Science and three multidisciplinary (C. Crăciun, 2003:30).

In another order of ideas the stage of development was overcome by passing to the next step, especially in the departments receiving substantial international cooperation. It means, that very quickly it was realized that European studies and European construction is not just treaties and economic integration. The influence of political parties, issues related to culture and identity, transatlantic relations during Cold War were themes raised to make more explicit the processes of European construction. Looking, however, today at European studies courses, this initial phase of implementation of European studies is again exceeded, most political science departments move to the stage of specialization. Specialization means that the study of Europe begins to be strongly related with various theoretical and illustrative issues. This is an advantage for the students who receive more information than five years ago on this subject, but the overall picture of European studies is still far from being heterogeneous and organized (C. Crăciun, 2003:30).

In 2003, the publication year of Claudiu Crăciun's study, the Romanian institution that best promotes European studies was Romanian European Institute, as he says. This institution currently supports the only magazine that refers to European affairs: „The Romanian Journal of European Affairs”, magazine that exists today. This is a trilingual publication, edited three times a year. European Commission through the Phare program has funded this initiative to which contributions come mainly from Western Europe, the Romanian ones being quite rare (C. Crăciun, 2003:30).

At the end of the study, Claudiu Crăciun says that the most important in judging the importance, success and development of European studies in Romania are the students. In Romania there is still a difference of perception between the “dynamic” Europe, represented by the activities of the European Union and European state, which taught in the schools, and also the one related to the accompanying bureaucracy. The author concludes that if scientists will be able to demonstrate how Europe favorably influences the life of Europeans, there is a chance for a successful Europe (C. Crăciun, 2003:35-36).

This is the image that gives Claudiu Crăciun on European studies in 2003. Subsequent developments and the developments that have taken place in this discipline are evident.

Aspects of Romanian university education today

Currently, in the documents of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the International Relations and European Studies field figures as part of Political Science department (ARACIS, 2009:18). A study program in this field must cover the following disciplines: *Introduction to International Relations, Introduction to European Studies, History of International Relations, World Economy, International Law, Research Methods in Social and Political Sciences, Introduction to Political Science, Political Ideologies in the contemporary era, European institutions, International Relations Theories, International institutions and organizations, Foreign policy and diplomacy*. We find also the following optional subjects, recommended: *Sociology of International Relations, Security Studies, Area Studies, International*

conflict analysis, Geostrategy and geopolitics, Negotiation and conflict in international relations, Globalism and globalization, European integration, EU law, The Governance in the EU, Community policies (ARACIS, 2009:22).

Firstly it can be noted that today European studies is a field of study, a specialization of the universities from Romania. This did not exist before 1989 in Romania, although other universities in Europe had already implemented the European Studies programs⁶. Currently, in Romania we have a Faculty of European Studies, the first of its kind in Romania, namely the Faculty of European Studies in Cluj-Napoca and 17 universities, which through 19 faculties have in their programs of study European Studies specialization, which in Romania is associated with a specialization in International Relations, in short RISE⁷. These universities and colleges are: Andrei Șaguna University of Constanta, Faculty of Communication Sciences and Political Science, specializing in RISE, Ovidius University of Constanta, Faculty of History and Political Science, specializing in RISE, SNSPA, Bucharest, Faculty of Political Science, specializing in RISE, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philosophy, specializing in European Studies and International Relations, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters, specializing in European Studies, West University of Timisoara, Faculty of Political Science, Philosophy and Communication Sciences, specializing in RISE, Spiru Haret University of Bucharest, Faculty of International Relations, History and Philosophy, specialization RISE, Danubius University of Galati, Faculty of International Relations and European Studies, specialization RISE, Mihail Kogălniceanu University of Iasi, Faculty of International Relations and European Studies, specialization RISE, University Alexandru Ioan Cuza of Iasi, Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences, specializing in RISE, Lucian Blaga University from Sibiu, Faculty of Political Science, International Relations and European Studies, specialization RISE, Constantin Brâncuși University of Targu-Jiu, Faculty of Public Administration and Comparative Political Studies, Specialization RISE, Petru Maior University of Targu-Mures, Faculty of Sciences and Letters, Specialty RISE, Western University Vasile Goldiș of Arad, Faculty of Humanities, Political and Administrative, specialization in RISE, University of Oradea, Faculty of History, Geography and International Relations, specialization in RISE, Babeș-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of European Studies, specialization in RISE, Babeș-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of History and Philosophy, specialization in RISE, Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Faculty of History and Geography, specializing in RISE, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, specialization in RISE.

If, before, the subjects were focused on Europe as a continent, without reference to the European Union, European Community, European Economy, etc, the subjects of today also refers to the idea of Europe as a continent especially in within some specializations, but also refers to the idea of European unity, European Union, the European institutions, European integration. This is somehow natural, given the political changes experienced by Romania in

⁶Rapport „Place de l'intégration européenne dans les programmes universitaires. Rapports nationaux” presented in Brussels on 29 to 30 June 1989, confirmed the existence of European Studies programs in EU member states at that time

⁷ International Relations and European Studies

recent years: joining the European Union and the need for specialists to represent Romania in the European institutions, trained personnel who understand processes and high-level integration mechanism as, at local level, opening of young people and population, in general, to Europe. In addition, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education provides a compatibility with European standards. Thus, despite the existing diversity in the area of political science, there are some minimum standards or programs that need to share the university whose mission incorporates European Studies (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009:25).

In another order of ideas, the changes are very natural, given the fact that education is a dynamic process that must be folded on the needs of contemporary society and the population. In these circumstances higher education, and the entire education system needs to integrate into society, individuals and turn them to the extent possible, in useful citizens, worthy, with equal rights, able to integrate into a society that suffers the unbridled impact of technology and science.

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